

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH AND MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS September 20, 2016

IMPROVING CHILD PROTECTION

As reported in the media, Yonatan A. was the 11 year old boy who was discovered confined to a closet and cruelly malnourished. This is seemingly a tragic case of severe abuse over a prolonged period of time allegedly at the hands of the child's mother.

The Department of Children and Family Services last interacted with the family in 2012. In following existing practice and policy, workers involved in the case may have utilized the "Structured Decision Making" (SDM) tool to determine the level of risk for the child. Evidence suggests that there may be potential shortcomings inherent in the SDM tool which may provide unclear guidance and the ability to override results.

Along with the numerous new policies and changes this Board has approved through the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission and the newly established Office of Child Protection, we should explore and evaluate the use of the SDM tool, its efficacy and limitations, and options for other alternatives.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Office of Child Protection, in consultation with the Department of Children and Family Services and any other involved departments, report back to the Board in 60 days on the current use and identified weaknesses of the SDM tool; and explore various alternatives, including an examination of the success of Project Aura and the use of predictive analytics for child safety and welfare.

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